Internal assessment

Purpose of internal assessment

Internal assessment is an integral part of the course and is compulsory for both SL and HL students. It

enables students to demonstrate the application of their skills and knowledge, and to pursue their personal

interests, without the time limitations and other constraints that are associated with written examinations.

The internal assessment should, as far as possible, be woven into normal classroom teaching and not be a

separate activity conducted after a course has been taught.

The internal assessment requirements at SL and at HL are the same.

Guidance and authenticity

The portfolio submitted for internal assessment must be the student’s own work. However, it is not the

intention that students should decide on the appropriate articles and then be left to work on the internally

assessed component without any further support from the teacher. The teacher should play an important

role during both the planning stage and the period when the student is working on the internally assessed

work. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that students are familiar with:

• the requirements of the type of work to be internally assessed—the nature of the sources of the

articles, and the formal requirements of the portfolio—and the IB’s academic honesty policy

• internal deadlines

• the nature of teacher support

• the assessment criteria; students must understand that the work submitted for assessment must

address these criteria effectively.

Teachers and students must discuss the internally assessed work. Students should be encouraged to initiate

discussions with the teacher to obtain advice and information, and students must not be penalized for

seeking guidance. However, if a student could not have completed the work without substantial support

from the teacher, this should be recorded on the appropriate form from the Handbook of procedures for the

Diploma Programme.

It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that all students understand the basic meaning and significance

of concepts that relate to academic honesty, especially authenticity and intellectual property. Teachers

must ensure that all student work for assessment is prepared according to the requirements and must

explain clearly to students that internally assessed work must be entirely their own.

As part of the learning process, teachers can give advice to students on a first draft of the internally assessed

work. This advice should be in terms of the way the work could be improved, but this first draft must not be

heavily annotated or edited by the teacher. The next version handed to the teacher after the first draft must

be the final one.

All work submitted to the IB for moderation or assessment must be authenticated by a teacher, and must

not include any known instances of suspected or confirmed malpractice. Each student must sign the

coversheet for internal assessment to confirm that the work is his or her authentic work and constitutes the

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final version of the work. Once a student has officially submitted the final version of the work to a teacher (or

the coordinator) for internal assessment, together with the signed coversheet, it cannot be retracted.

Authenticity may be checked by discussion with the student on the content of the work and scrutiny of one

or more of the following:

• the student’s initial choice of articles

• the first draft of the written work

• the references cited

• the style of writing compared with work known to be that of the student.

The requirement for teachers and students to sign the coversheet for internal assessment applies to the

work of all students, not just the sample work that will be submitted to an examiner for the purpose of

moderation. If the teacher and student sign a coversheet, but there is a comment to the effect that the

work may not be authentic, the student will not be eligible for a mark in that component and no grade will

be awarded. For further details refer to the IB publication Academic honesty and the relevant articles in the

General regulations: Diploma Programme.

The same piece of work cannot be submitted to meet the requirements of both the internal assessment and

the extended essay.

Time allocation

Internal assessment is an integral part of the economics course, contributing 20% to the final assessment in

the SL and the HL courses. This weighting should be reflected in the time that is allocated to teaching the

knowledge, skills and understanding required to undertake the work, as well as the total time allocated to

carry out the work.

It is recommended that a total of approximately 20 hours should be allocated to the portfolio at both SL and

HL. This should include:

• time for the teacher to explain to students the requirements of the internal assessment

• class time for students to work on the internal assessment component

• time for consultation between the teacher and each student

• time to review and monitor progress and to check authenticity.

Requirements and recommendations

It is important for the integrity of the moderation process that the internal assessment by the teacher is

based on the same evidence as that available to the moderator.

When there is more than one teacher teaching students in this component, internal standardization must

take place.

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Using assessment criteria for internal assessment

For internal assessment, a number of assessment criteria have been identified. Each assessment criterion has

level descriptors describing specific levels of achievement together with an appropriate range of marks. The

level descriptors concentrate on positive achievement although, for the lower levels, failure to achieve may

be included in the description.

Teachers must judge the internally assessed work at SL and at HL against the criteria using the level

descriptors.

• The same assessment criteria are provided for SL and HL.

• The aim is to find, for each criterion, the descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained

by the student, using the best-fit model. A best-fit approach means that compensation should be

made when a piece of work matches different aspects of a criterion at different levels. The mark

awarded should be one that most fairly reflects the balance of achievement against the criterion. It is

not necessary for every single aspect of a level descriptor to be met for that mark to be awarded.

• When assessing a student’s work, teachers should read the level descriptors for each criterion until

they reach a descriptor that most appropriately describes the level of the work being assessed. If a

piece of work seems to fall between two descriptors, both descriptors should be read again and the

one that more appropriately describes the student’s work should be chosen.

• Where there are two or more marks available within a level, teachers should award the upper marks if

the student’s work demonstrates the qualities described to a great extent. Teachers should award the

lower marks if the student’s work demonstrates the qualities described to a lesser extent.

• Only whole numbers should be recorded; partial marks, that is, fractions and decimals, are not

acceptable.

• Teachers should not think in terms of a pass or fail boundary, but should concentrate on identifying

the appropriate descriptor for each assessment criterion.

• The highest level descriptors do not imply faultless performance but should be achievable by a

student. Teachers should not hesitate to use the extremes if they are appropriate descriptions of the

work being assessed.

• A student who attains a high level of achievement in relation to one criterion will not necessarily

attain high levels of achievement in relation to the other criteria. Similarly, a student who attains a low

level of achievement for one criterion will not necessarily attain low achievement levels for the other

criteria. Teachers should not assume that the overall assessment of the students will produce any

particular distribution of marks.

• It is recommended that the assessment criteria be made available to students.

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Internal assessment details—SL and HL

Portfolio

Duration: 20 hours

Weighting: 20%

Rationale

Internal assessment in economics enables students to demonstrate the application of their knowledge and

understanding of economic theory to real-world situations.

Requirements

Both SL and HL economics students produce a portfolio of three commentaries based on articles from

published news media. Each article must be based on a different section of the syllabus (microeconomics,

macroeconomics, international economics and development economics).

Articles

The articles may be from a newspaper, a journal or the internet, but must not be from television or radio

broadcasts. If a student includes a relatively lengthy article, which is very much discouraged, the student

must highlight the section(s) of the article upon which the commentary is based.

The article on which the commentary is based should, where possible, be in the same language as the

commentary. If an extract in another language is used, the student must provide an accurate translation of

the whole article. Students must also include the original article in their portfolio.

Individual work

Students must select their own articles to discuss. It may happen that more than one student bases his

or her commentary on the same article, but the article must not be given to the class by the teacher, and

the production of the commentary must be each student’s individual work. A commentary must not be

prepared collaboratively.

Focus

Each commentary must:

• explain the linkages between the article and economic theory taken from the section of the syllabus

on which the article is based

• demonstrate economic insights into the implications of the article (that is, it should provide evidence

of the student’s ability to discuss current events from the point of view of an economist).

On each commentary students must record:

• the title of the article

• the source of the article (including date of access to the site if from the internet)

• the date the article was published

• the date the commentary was written

• the word count of the commentary

• the section of the syllabus to which the article relates.

Each commentary in the portfolio is assessed individually against the internal assessment criteria. The

teacher will initially assess each student’s work. Please note that internal standardization must take place

when more than one teacher is assessing. A sample of the work will then be moderated by the IB.

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Please refer to the Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme for details on how to present the work

for moderation.

Rubric requirements

If students do not adhere to the following requirements, they can lose marks under criterion F: Rubric

requirements.

1. Word limit

Students must produce a portfolio of three commentaries. Each commentary must not exceed 750 words.

Note: Moderators will not read beyond 750 words for each commentary.

The following are not included in the word count.

• Acknowledgments

• Contents page

• Diagrams

• Labels—of five words or fewer

• Headings on diagrams—of 10 words or fewer

• Tables of statistical data

• Equations, formulae and calculations

• Citations (which, if used, must be in the body of the commentary)

• References (which, if used, must be in the footnotes/endnotes)

Please note that footnotes/endnotes may be used for references only. Definitions of economic terms and

quotations, if used, must be in the body of the work and are included in the word count. Please note that a

citation is a shorthand method of making a reference in the body of the commentary, which is then linked to

the full reference in the footnotes/endnotes.

2. Articles

Each article must be based on a different section of the syllabus.

3. Sources

Students must use a different source for each commentary.

4. Contemporary articles

Students need to look for articles relating to current events and these must be published no earlier than one

year before the writing of the commentary.

5. Contents

Each portfolio must contain:

• a summary portfolio coversheet

• a commentary coversheet for each commentary

• three commentaries, accompanied in each case by the relevant article.

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Internal assessment criteria—SL and HL

Overview

There are five internal assessment criteria for each commentary.

Criterion A Diagrams 3 marks

Criterion B Terminology 2 marks

Criterion C Application 2 marks

Criterion D Analysis 3 marks

Criterion E Evaluation 4 marks

Total 14 marks

There is one internal assessment criterion for the whole portfolio.

Criterion F Rubric requirements 3 marks

Each commentary is assessed individually for the first five assessment criteria (criteria A–E) and then criterion

F is applied to the whole portfolio.

The maximum for the portfolio is 45 marks: (14 marks x 3 commentaries) + 3 marks = 42 + 3 marks.

The assessment criteria are related to the assessment objectives.

• Criterion A: AO2 and AO4

• Criterion B: AO1

• Criterion C: AO2

• Criterion D: AO2

• Criterion E: AO3

• Criterion F: AO4

Portfolio (SL/HL)

Criterion A: Diagrams

• This criterion assesses the extent to which the student is able to construct and use diagrams.

Level Descriptor

0 The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.

1

Relevant diagram(s) are included but not explained, or the explanations are

incorrect.

2

Relevant, accurate and correctly labelled diagram(s) are included, with a

limited explanation.

3

Relevant, accurate and correctly labelled diagram(s) are included, with a full

explanation.

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Criterion B: Terminology

• This criterion assesses the extent to which the student uses appropriate economic terminology.

Level Descriptor

0 The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.

1 Terminology relevant to the article is included in the commentary.

2

Terminology relevant to the article is used appropriately throughout the

commentary.

Criterion C: Application

• This criterion assesses the extent to which the student recognizes, understands and applies economic

information in the context of the article.

Level Descriptor

0 The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.

1 Relevant economic concepts and/or theories are applied to the article.

2

Relevant economic concepts and/or theories are applied to the article

appropriately throughout the commentary.

Criterion D: Analysis

• This criterion assesses the extent to which the student can explain and develop appropriate economic

theories and/or concepts in the context of the article.

Level Descriptor

0 The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.

1 There is limited economic analysis relating to the article.

2 There is appropriate economic analysis relating to the article.

3 There is effective economic analysis relating to the article.

Criterion E: Evaluation

• This criterion assesses the extent to which the student synthesizes his or her analysis in order to make

judgments that are supported by reasoned arguments.

Level Descriptor

0 The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.

1 Judgments are made that are unsupported, or supported, by incorrect

reasoning.

2 Judgments are made that are supported by limited reasoning.

3 Judgments are made that are supported by appropriate reasoning.

4 Judgments are made that are supported by effective and balanced

reasoning.

Criterion F: Rubric requirements

• This criterion assesses the extent to which the student meets the five rubric requirements for the

complete portfolio.

–– Each commentary does not exceed 750 words.

–– Each article is based on a different section of the syllabus.

–– Each article is taken from a different and appropriate source.

–– Each article was published no earlier than one year before the writing of the commentary.

–– The summary portfolio coversheet, three commentary coversheets and the article for each

commentary are included.

Level Descriptor

0 The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.

1 Three rubric requirements are met.

2 Four rubric requirements are met.

3 All five rubric requirements are met.